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JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to submit to the General Assembly his comments on the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)" (JIU/REP/93/6-A/48/421, annex).

ANNEX

Comments of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) entitled "Staffing of the United Nations peace-keeping and related missions (civilian component)" (A/48/421, annex) is, as noted by the Inspectors in paragraph 6, an interim report, dealing only with one aspect of United Nations peace-keeping operations, namely, the staffing of the civilian component of those operations and related missions.

2. The report has been prepared in accordance with the statute of JIU, and in the light of General Assembly resolution 47/218 of 23 December 1992 on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, in section III of which the Assembly, inter alia, invited the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen and reform the Secretariat units dealing with peace-keeping operations.

3. The basic premises of the JIU report are in line with the dramatic increase in the number of peace-keeping operations and the concerns expressed by Member States and within the international community to the effect that (a) there was a need to examine thoroughly how United Nations Headquarters and field structures might be strengthened to cope with peace-keeping and related missions; and that (b) it would be helpful, at this juncture, to analyse recruitment policies and practices, training methodologies, and conditions of service with respect to the various peace-keeping and related missions.

II. GENERAL COMMENTS

4. The Secretary-General welcomes the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which represents a valuable and timely contribution to both the planning and management aspects of field operations and the issues pertaining to the staffing of civilian personnel in such operations. In general, the Secretary-General is in full agreement with the comments, conclusions and recommendations of the Inspectors, subject to the observations contained herein. It should be noted that some of the recommendations, designed to bring about enhanced efficiency and a more coherent management, have already been implemented. For example, as recommended by the Inspectors, the Field Operations Division was incorporated into the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, with effect from 1 September 1993. Similarly, during the past year, the Task Force on United Nations Operations was set up to serve as the primary instrument of coordination among departments and to provide the Secretary-General with options and recommendations on issues of policy relating to field operations. The establishment of the Situation Room also ensures close, around-the-clock monitoring of developments on the ground in field operations.

5. Recent changes in field operations are marked by both quantitative and qualitative elements. As noted by the Inspectors in paragraph 2 of their report, there has been a surge in the number and size of such operations, and

their scope has tended increasingly to become multi-dimensional and multi-functional, extending in certain cases to enforcement action. Those changes have generated the need for new and innovative managerial policies and tools, many of which are being actively implemented at Headquarters and in field operations.

III. SPECIFIC COMMENTS

A. Recommendations regarding planning and management (I-II)

6. The Secretary-General welcomes the recommendations on planning and management, relating to both Headquarters and field components. As indicated in paragraph 11 of the report, those recommendations were designed with a view to having a more coherent and consolidated management; avoiding duplication; enhancing coordination and sharpening the process of early warning; pre-planning for contingencies; formal planning; deployment monitoring and evaluation. As noted in paragraph 4 above, some of the initiatives suggested have already been implemented.

7. In recommendation I (a) it is suggested that the Department of Peace-keeping Operations should become the central, or "lead", Department in the Secretariat dealing with peace-keeping operations, as discussed in paragraphs 27 to 29 of the JIU report. In addition to being responsible for the planning, organization, deployment, control and management of peace-keeping operations, the Department is also the operational arm of the Secretary-General for all United Nations field operations. In this capacity, it acts as the main channel of communication between United Nations Headquarters and the field missions. At the same time, the Department of Political Affairs on strictly political matters, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs on humanitarian policy matters, and the Department of Administration and Management on financial and security matters contact the field missions as required. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations is kept informed of those actions, and submits weekly reports to the Secretary-General on the status of field operations, with observations on situations of particular importance. Moreover, the Department of Peace-keeping Operations plays an important role, in cooperation with the Department of Peace-keeping Operations plays an important role, in cooperation with the Department of Political Affairs, in the preparation of all reports on field operations submitted to the Security Council or the General Assembly. In this connection, the Secretary-General takes note of the increasingly extensive role of the Office of Legal Affairs with respect to peace-keeping operations and all field operations. He would not characterize that Office's contribution as marginal, as noted in paragraph 15 of the JIU report.

8. Recommendation I (b), to the effect that the Department of Peace-keeping Operations should be strengthened in terms of experienced civilian and military personnel, is supported. The Secretary-General has submitted proposals to that effect both under the regular budget of the Organization and under the peace-keeping support account. The JIU recommendation further envisages task forces of Under-Secretaries-General, established by the Secretary-General, serving as a Board of Directors for the Department. As noted in paragraph 20 of the JIU report, the Task Force chaired by the Secretary-General and, in his absence, by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs meets weekly.

Furthermore, interdepartmental working groups dealing with various aspects of field operations, ranging from staffing issues to training to budgetary matters, meet regularly and report periodically to the Field Operations Steering Committee.

9. As noted above and with respect to recommendation I (c), the integration of the Field Operations Division into the Department of Peace-keeping Operations has been carried out. With reference to paragraph 31 of the JIU report, it may be noted that the Division is organized vertically along functional lines, and also horizontally on a mission-by-mission basis. That organizational structure is being reviewed in order to ascertain whether its effectiveness can be further enhanced in connection with the Division's incorporation into the Department.

10. As regards recommendation I (d), with which the Secretary-General is in full agreement, it should be noted that currently the directors and desk officers of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations form core teams to deal with specific missions and regions. Both reconnaissance missions and "fire brigades" draw upon members of those teams. In recommendation I (d) and the corresponding paragraphs in the report indicated above, it is further suggested that the top cross-functional leadership in the core team be used for reconnaissance missions as well as "fire brigades" which can be deployed at short notice for crisis solutions. It should also be noted in this regard that the Field Operations Division, as part of its pre-planning efforts, is currently preparing a reconnaissance mission handbook which reflects this arrangement with respect to the composition of such missions.

11. Recommendation I (e), in which the Inspectors call for the establishment, within the Department of Peace-keeping Operations, of a post of Police Commissioner (called "Police Advisor"), has been carried out.

12. Recommendation I (f), is under progressive implementation. The Situation Room already collates information from field missions for senior decision makers and for onward transmission to the Security Council. It follows up on events and alerts decision makers to situations that could require action.

13. As regards recommendation I (g), it is proposed to redeploy a number of posts to create a focal point unit within the Department of Peace-keeping Operations. The unit will serve as an authoritative source of information to which Permanent Missions can address all questions concerning peace-keeping operations.

14. Recommendation II has particular merit. With regard to II (a), every effort is being made to ensure that clear lines of authority and interrelationship exist in the field between the Chief of Mission and the heads of the different components within missions. Using the experience gained from recent complex United Nations operations, such as those in Namibia and Cambodia, and from current multi-dimensional operations, guidelines are being developed which will be promulgated to ensure more cohesive working relations among mission components.

15. With regard to recommendation II (b), the concept of a joint operations centre is already in effect in the two largest field missions, UNPROFOR and

UNOSOM, and such a centre will be introduced into other large multi-dimensional missions.

16. Decentralization and delegation of authority to the field (recommendation II (c)) with appropriate controls are desirable objectives and are accordingly being examined to ensure that they exist, where appropriate.

B. Recommendations on the staffing of the civilian component (III-VII)

17. The quantitative and qualitative expansion of field operations, noted in paragraphs 42 to 50 of the JIU report, has important implications with respect to the staffing of the civilian component of the operations. The scope of "new generation" peace-keeping operations has tended increasingly to extend beyond traditional military concerns into such areas as election monitoring, policing, humanitarian affairs and even civil administration. A natural outcome of that growth and diversity has been the expansion of civilian personnel into those new areas in addition to its traditional functions (e.g., political and legal affairs, public information, personnel administration, finance and budget and general support services). In both quantitative and qualitative terms, the personnel requirements generated by that growth have not been successfully met in all cases. There is currently a fairly high vacancy rate in some field operations and the establishment of new operations might well exacerbate the problem. Against this background, the recommendations of the Inspectors concerning the staffing of civilian personnel in general, and new sources of recruitment in particular, are viewed by the Secretary-General as particularly useful and timely.

18. Recommendation III (a) on the establishment of a pre-certified roster of personnel with specialized training in administrative, financial, logistical and electoral components has been implemented. The mission roster now includes over 8,500 names and efforts are being made to expand and update it through world-wide advertising.

19. Recommendation III (b) on a roster of retirees is also being implemented. Such a roster exists and has proved to be very useful. It should be noted, however, that the interest of retirees in serving in missions is affected, inter alia, by Pension Fund requirements that retirees who are engaged for a period exceeding six months must resume their participation in the Fund.

20. The Secretary-General welcomes recommendation III (c), which was also made by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/47/990, para. 19), and intends to recruit United Nations Volunteers whenever feasible. It should be borne in mind, however, that not all functions in a peace-keeping operation can appropriately be carried out by those individuals. Their functions, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 2659 (XXV) of 7 December 1970, by which it established the United Nations Volunteers programme, are to assist national development efforts. It may be advisable to revise the involvement and functions of United Nations Volunteers in peace-keeping operations to place them on a firmer legislative basis. The mandate of the United Nations Volunteers might be broadened and the volunteer given appropriate training. It should be further noted that it might be

prudent, at least until more experience is acquired, not to envisage the large-scale deployment of United Nations Volunteers in central administrative functions. In such centralized functions their lack of United Nations experience and their integration vis-à-vis other categories of United Nations personnel could give rise to difficulties.

21. Finally, United Nations Volunteers who are under the administrative authority of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative in their country of assignment should, during their service to a mission, be accountable only to the Chief of the mission. This can be achieved through the conclusion of appropriate Memoranda of Understanding between UNDP and the United Nations.

22. With regard to recommendation III (d) and the preceding analysis (paras. 63-66), the Secretary-General shares the view that secondment of international staff from specialized agencies should be encouraged, and that there is a need to pursue the question more vigorously through the mechanism of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Within the United Nations Secretariat itself, the assignment to field operations of staff at duty stations away from Headquarters needs to be encouraged.

23. The Secretary-General supports recommendation IV, which deals with outside recruitment. Clearly, sources of recruitment such as local-level staff, civilian personnel provided by Governments, personnel from within or outside the United Nations system, or contractual staff provided by international service agencies should be tapped more actively because (a) a number of skills are not available in the United Nations system and (b) outside recruitment may be more cost-effective over time. However, as indicated by the Secretary-General previously (A/45/502), certain civilian functions, tasks and services in a peace-keeping operation can only be performed by United Nations staff members and the core civilian functions of a peace-keeping operation, including the political direction and the administration of an operation in the field in all its facets - among them the formulation of policy and functions involving financial or personnel certifying authority - must be performed by United Nations staff members. On the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the General Assembly has included the legal function in the list of core functions.

24. Recommendation IV (a) that recruitment of local staff should be encouraged is strongly supported. It should be noted that about two thirds of the civilian posts in current field operations are for locally recruited staff, mostly in the General Service and related categories. At the same time, some limitations apply to the use of such personnel, ranging from the size and nature of the operation and its staffing table to the labour market in the host country, political sensitivities and issues of confidentiality.

25. Recommendation IV (b), relating to an innovative source of civilian personnel, namely, international contractual personnel, and encouraging more extensive use of contractual arrangements, is being actively explored by the Field Operations Division. A report to the General Assembly on the use of civilian personnel in peace-keeping missions describes in detail such arrangements and contains proposals regarding the regime to be applied. Contractual personnel were first used in some professional, but especially

technical and trade-related areas, by contract through international service agencies. That initiative, begun in November 1992, has been useful enough to warrant its wider consideration whenever the usual methods of assignment or recruitment cannot provide qualified personnel without unacceptable delays. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions in December 1992, reporting on the financing of UNPROFOR, noted the relatively low cost of contractual personnel and expressed the view that similar procedures should be considered, when appropriate, in other peace-keeping operations (A/47/778, para. 41).

26. However, there are a number of concerns that have to be addressed if the use of such personnel is to be expanded significantly. In particular, the establishment by the General Assembly of a legal regime under which internationally contracted personnel, like all personnel engaged in United Nations field operations regardless of their contractual status, could be afforded legal protection and included in all security arrangements undertaken by the host Government appears to be a prerequisite before large numbers of such personnel are deployed in field operations. Such issues as the role of the Organization in ensuring a fair remuneration of contractual personnel, working relations with United Nations staff, and the control of the quality of the services rendered also need to be further reviewed by the Secretariat.

27. The Secretary-General welcomes recommendation IV (c) on the provision of civilian personnel by Governments. Such personnel would be provided pursuant to the Secretary-General's proposals, set out in paragraphs 11 to 17 of his report on the use of civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations (A/45/502), which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/258 of 3 May 1991. Specific guidelines for the participation of such personnel in missions either have been developed, as in the case of election and polling monitors, or are in the process of being developed in the form of Memoranda of Understanding.

28. Recommendation IV (d) on the secondment of personnel by regional organizations has some merit but there have been difficulties in this regard, ranging from political sensitivities to terms of service.

29. Recommendations V and VII (f) are endorsed. In them the Inspectors advocate the formulation of new policies and procedures with a more effective field orientation, and the need to adjust staff regulations, rules and personnel policies to the requirements of field missions. A revised text of the 300-series of staff rules has now been completed for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. It is expected that it will provide a more suitable framework for contractual arrangements in the field.

30. Recommendation VI (a) is endorsed. In fact, steps have been taken by the Secretariat to ensure that all mission personnel receive guidance with respect to appropriate standards of behaviour, specific mission information and specialized training. As recommended in VI (b), (c) and (d), the objective of training will be adapted to cover the diverse functions to be carried out in missions and the different levels of management involved. The Secretary-General is fully aware of the importance of on-the-job training mentioned in VI (e) and has initiated steps for such measures.

31. Steps have already been taken in line with recommendation VI (g), in which the Inspectors call for the use of existing United Nations training facilities, such as the Turin Centre, for peace-keeping training. None the less, feasibility studies must be carried out to assess the cost of establishing full-time United Nations training establishments. The Secretary-General is of the view, however, that a more feasible solution may be that proposed in recommendation VI (h), namely that Member States and regional organizations should put their training resources at the disposal of the United Nations. The Department of Peace-keeping Operations is discussing coordination arrangements with several Governments. Currently, peace-keeping training is provided by some Member States in their own military training colleges. That procedure could well be adapted to the many facets of civilian peace-keeping.

32. Training of the civilian component should be integrated into the development of human resources for operations in the field. As discussed in recommendation VI (i), the design and target of specific training programmes for the civilian component should be developed jointly by the departments concerned.

33. Recommendation VII consists of six components, all dealing with conditions of service. In recommendation VII (a) it is stated that mission assignments should continue to be voluntary. The Secretary-General concurs in this approach and is of the view that the hardships of field missions provide the rationale for continued voluntary service. This approach of course sets some limits to the implementation of recommendation VII (b) supporting the principle of rotation between departments at Headquarters and the field.

34. Recommendation VII (c), to the effect that the security of personnel must be included in all mission planning, briefing, training and execution, is already at the implementation stage. This is reflected in the discussions which have taken place in such forums as the Field Operations Steering Committee and the Field Operations Training Policy Group. The draft reconnaissance mission handbook also makes the safety and security of personnel a top priority consideration in the planning of a new field operation.

35. Recommendation VII (d) relates to appropriate behaviour of personnel, which is deemed to require, inter alia, a specific code of conduct, raised awareness of cultural differences, and establishment and enforcement of disciplinarian procedures. Again, the recommendation is well taken and is already at the implementation stage: the code of conduct is being reviewed by a task force, and special training programmes which cover training in cultural awareness are being designed for both military and civilian personnel. It should also be mentioned that the issue of cultural awareness and the related requirements in terms of behaviour and conduct are applicable equally to military and civilian personnel.

36. In recommendation VII (e), the International Civil Service Commission is urged to consider extending the applicability of hazardous duty pay to categories additional to the staff members. The responsibility in this matter clearly rests with the Commission, and the Secretary-General awaits its consideration of the issue.